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## Death of The Journal Editor

Sophia F. Palmer, Editor-in-chief of the JOURNAL, died at her summer home, Forest Lawn, N. Y., April 27, 1920.

The news of Miss Palmer's death will be a shock to all who are members of the JOURNAL family, whether or not they knew her personally. It came very suddenly, even to those who were in close touch with her, though she had been feeling far from well this spring and cancelled her plans for attending the convention because she felt so unequal to the exertion. She remained at her post, however, and prepared this issue of the JOURNAL for publication. The editorials which follow are her last work for it. When her assistant returned from Atlanta, Miss Palmer gave up trying to come to the office, but kept in touch with the work still, at her home and by telephone. On Friday, April 23, she left her home in Brunswick Street, where she had lived for many years and which she had just sold, where the JOURNAL office was housed in its early days, and went to her cottage at the lake. Early on Saturday morning, she called her faithful housekeeper, who had been her constant companion, asking her to help her to sit up. It was impossible to raise her, and in a few minutes unconsciousness came. A severe cerebral hemorrhage had occurred, and during the days that followed, Miss Palmer lay peacefully unconscious, as if asleep, gradually growing weaker until the end came.

We have given these details because we know that hundreds of the JOURNAL readers have felt that Miss Palmer was their personal friend, as indeed she was. She had been the editor of this magazine from its first appearance, indeed she was one of the group that worked to establish it.

Some years ago, Miss Palmer gave most implicit instruction to her assistant, that in case of her death, the JOURNAL pages were not to be filled with tributes to her. A simple outline of her life was all she wished to have published. We

can do no less than follow her known wishes in this matter. The pages of the letter department will be open, however, to those who wish to express what she has meant to them.

Sophia F. Palmer was of straight New England stock, being descended from John and Priscilla Alden. William and Walter Palmer, who came over in "The Anne," one of the early ships, were among her ancestors, as were the Richmonds, the Danforths, long connected with Harvard College, and Governor Hinckley, revolutionary governor of Massachusetts. Miss Palmer was born in Milton, Mass., in 1853; her father was a physician. The family moved, later, to Fairhaven, near New Bedford.

Miss Palmer began her training as a nurse at the Massachusetts General Hospital in May, 1876, three years after the first training school had been established. Miss Linda Richards was the superintendent of nurses. This was before the days of aseptic surgery.

After graduating, Miss Palmer spent a year and a half in Philadelphia with Dr. Weir Mitchell, caring for his patients, whom he placed in boarding houses, and then went to the Pacific Coast with an insane patient. The trip took seven days and Miss Palmer was alone with the patient. She stayed in California two years. There was no development in schools for nurses on the Pacific Coast at that time, the only hospital she heard of while there was the County Hospital, of which every one had a dread. When relief was needed for her patient, only practical nurses could be obtained. Miss Palmer was probably the first trained nurse to cross the Rockies.

On her return from the Pacific Coast, Miss Palmer did private nursing for a time and then went to New Bedford to organize St. Luke's Hospital and Training School, remaining there about two years. After some more time spent in private nursing, she returned to the Massachusetts General, ten years after graduation, when Miss Maxwell was superintendent of nurses, and was in charge of various wards for a year, doing substitute work during vacations and obtaining post-graduate experience at the same time. From there she went to the Garfield Memorial in Washington, to reorganize the hospital and to establish the training school. This was done under tremendous opposition. There were no training schools at that time further south than Philadelphia, except one theoretical school in Washington with which many of the leading

physicians were affiliated and which opposed the establishment of the Garfield school. Miss Palmer was at the Garfield Hospital a little more than five years and then spent some time at home with her family.

In 1896, she came to Rochester, N. Y., to reorganize the City Hospital, now the General, and spent five years there. During the last year of her service there she was also organizing the JOURNAL of which she had been made editor-in-chief. She did this for nine months, in addition to her regular work and without salary, as a member of the Publication Committee. She then retired from hospital work to a home of her own and has since then continued to make the editing of the JOURNAL her chief occupation.

Miss Palmer was one of the small group of women who attended the Congress of Nurses in Chicago at the time of the World's Fair in 1893. She was one of the committee which organized the Superintendents' Society, now the National League of Nursing Education. She was one of the committee of twelve appointed from the Superintendents' Society to organize the Associated Alumnae, now the American Nurses' Association. In the early days of the Superintendents' Society she was often one of the Councillors.

During her last year at the General Hospital, while working up the plan of the JOURNAL, she put forth the idea of state registration for nurses. Up to that time it had not been discussed in this country though it had been proposed in England though not in a practical way. The idea came to Miss Palmer through the young physicians coming into the hospital to whom their examinations and registration meant so much. It seemed to her that the same principle of recognition by the state which had been established for doctors might be extended to nurses. Just at that time the New York State Federation of Women's Clubs held a meeting in Rochester and Miss Palmer was asked to read a paper on some subject of interest to both the club women and the nurses of the state. She chose the subject of State Registration for Nurses; this was probably the first public expression of the idea.

Miss Palmer was the first president of the New York State Board of Nurse Examiners, serving during the constructive period when principles were established which have since been applied in all registration work in the country. She was a member of the local and national committees on Red Cross Nursing Service. Indeed, there was not a nursing in-

terest in the country in which she had not a part, either actively or as an adviser. Her loss will be felt in every branch of our profession; our best memorial to her is to carry forward in the best and highest sense, the work to which she gave her life.

